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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, October 27, 1944

Subject: HALLOWE'EN SNACKS Information from nutritionists and home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Hallowe'en, Hallowe'n. Apples a-bob.

Elves at the key-hole. Imps on the hob.

Yes, Tuesday night's Hallowe'en. And the younger set....the small fry and the bobby-socks crowd...wants a party. Well, for once, we can't offer the excuse that it's too much trouble. Hallowe'en's the bargain day of holidays. It's one time in the year when you don't have to spend much money to have a lot of fun. Hallowe'en's the traditional night for good old-fashioned homemade merriment and good old-fashioned food.

Refreshments can be wonderfully simple. Peanuts and apples and popcorn balls. And later in the evening serve the ghosts who've walked with peanut butter sandwiches, fresh gingerbread and hot spiced cider.

Here's a recipe for popcorn balls that takes only a cup and a half of sugar for two quarts of freshly popped corn.

But before I tell you how to make popcorn balls, let me give you a tip on how to keep your corn popable. If you're corn hasn't been popping well, it may be too dry. You can remedy this by putting a little water in the bottom of a fruit jar and pouring the popcorn in the jar. Screw the top on and let the corn stand for a day or two. It'll absorb the moisture and you'll find the popability has greatly improved. Might mark this on your calendar for today or tomorrow so that your popcorn will have the moisture it needs for good popability by Tuesday.

And now for the recipe for popcorn balls. First, here are the ingredients. Two quarts of freshly popped corn. A cup and a half of sugar. A cup of water.



Two tablespoons of vinegar, a half a teaspoon of salt and a teaspoon of vanilla.

I'll repeat the ingredients for the sirup. A cup and a half of sugar. A cup of water. Two tablespoons of vinegar and a half a teaspoon of salt. Just boil these together until the sirup hardens when you drop a little in cold water. Or if you use a candy thermometer, boil until the sirup registers 250 degrees Fahrenheit. Then add the vanilla. By the way, if your youngsters like the chocolate flavor, make your chocolate popcorn balls by blending a third of a cup of cocoa with the sugar when you start to make the sirup.

Two cups of nut kernels - peanuts, pecans or hickory nuts are good - will add to the richness of the popcorn balls. Mix the sirup well with the popcorn and nuts. When the popcorn's cooled enough to handle, grease your hands and form it into balls.

Peanut butter sandwiches are a popular Hallowe'en standby. A good choice for youngsters too. Use whole wheat bread. And make crisp, crunchy fillings by mixing the peanut butter with chopped carrots. Or chopped celery or apples or dill pickles. A delicious creamy sandwich spread is made of peanut butter and strained honey.

Serve hot spiced cider with the popcorn balls and peanut butter sandwiches. You can make this on the morning of Hallowe'en because it needs to cool and stand for several hours before it's reheated and served.

The spices you use for this are stick cinnamon, whole cloves and whole allspice. For a quart of cider, you'll need 8 short pieces of stick cinnamon, 12 whole cloves and 8 whole allspice.

A fourth of a cup of sugar and an eighth of a teaspoon of salt give the cider the right flavor. Just put the spices, the salt and the sugar in the cider. Bring to a boiling point, but don't boil. Then cool and let it stand. Just before you get ready to serve the cider, reheat it. Take the whole spices out and serve it piping hot.

Gingerbread's another favorite for Hallowe'en parties. It can serve not only as refreshment with the hot spiced cider but also as a cake of fortune. Wash and dry a collection of little articles to tell fortunes. A ring for marriage. A dime for riches. A button for the bachelor. A small thimble and so on. Then you serve the cake, tell your young guests to eat it with care. They'll find their fortunes in it. For as the poem goes:

"Who'll have their fate told? This night is known
Whose hand is full of gold. Who goes alone."

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